

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: SNAR, TU
SUBJECT: APPRAISAL OF TURKISH OPIUM POPPY LICENSING AND CENTRAL
EFFORTS IN 1977

1. WITH THE PROSPECTS OF A VERY LARGE OPIUM POPPY HARVEST
AND SUBSEQUENT LARGE PURCHASES OF POPPY CAPSULES BY THE
GOT, THE EMBASSY HAS MADE AN EVALUATION OF THE TURKISH CONTROL
EFFORTS. WHILE IT IS STILL EARLY TO ACCURATELY PREDICT
THE MEASURED/HARVESTED AREA OR THE TOTAL CAPSULE YIELD
IN 1977, WE DO KNOW THAT 98,000 HECTARES WERE LICENSED
AND WINTER LOSS WAS MINIMAL -- PROBABLY AROUND FIVE PERCENT.
THE GREATEST UNKNOWN AT PRESENT IS THE NUMBER OF FARMERS
WHO APPLIED FOR A LARGER AREA THAN THEY INTENDED TO PLANT SO
THAT THEY WOULD BE ON THE SAFE SIDE WHEN THE MEASURING WAS
DONE. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT FARMERS DID MORE OF THIS THAN
IN THE PAST AND WERE EVEN ENCOURAGED TO DO SO BY TMO
(SOIL PRODUCTS OFFICE) CONTROLLERS BECAUSE PENALTIES FOR
OVER-PLANTING WERE SO SEVERE AND THE FARMERS WERE
ACCOUNTABLE ONLY FOR THE AREA ACTUALLY PLANTED. REGARDLESS
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OF THE UNKNOWNNS OF FINAL MEASURED AREA, SPRING MOISTURE,
ETC., THE 1977 CROP WILL BE LARGE.

2. THE EMBASSY IS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ECONOMICS OF
SUCH A CROP THAN THE PROBABILITY OF DIVERSION OF SOME OF
THIS CROP INTO ILLICIT CHANNELS. WE DO BELIEVE THE GOT
WILL PURCHASE THE ENTIRE CROP AT LAST YEAR'S PRICES OR

EVEN A SLIGHTLY HIGHER PRICE. ALL BUT 3500 TONS OF THE 14,000 TON 1976 CROP HAS NOW BEEN SOLD WITH GOOD PROSPECTS FOR SELLING MORE BEFORE THE 1977 HARVEST. THE GOT IS PURCHASING 15-20 CRUSHERS WHICH WILL BE USED AT MAJOR BUYING STATIONS WHERE FARMERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO TURN IN INTACT CAPSULES WITH SEEDS. TMO WILL CRUSH THE CAPSULES AND RETURN THE SEED TO FARMERS. THIS IS AN ADDED CONTROL MEASURE AND REDUCES THE VOLUME OF THE CAPSULES CONSIDERABLY SO STORAGE PROBLEMS WILL BE REDUCED.

3. THE INCREASED AREA UNDER POPPY CULTIVATION IN 1976/1977 CONSISTS ALMOST ENTIRELY OF MORE PLANTINGS IN AND AROUND TRADITIONAL GROWING AREAS -- POPPIES ARE TRADITIONALLY GROWN INTENSELY IN SMALL VALLEYS AND AROUND VILLAGES AND ARE GENERALLY VERY VISIBLE FROM THE ROADS.

4. WE SEE NO PRECEDENT FOR THE GOT TO RENEGE ON ITS COMMITMENT TO PAY THE ESTABLISHED HIGH PRICE TO FARMERS FOR THE CAPSULES. TMO, THE ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE FOR CAPSULE BUYING, PURCHASED 2.4 MILLION TONS OF WHEAT AT \$70 PER TON OVER THE WORLD PRICE IN 1976 ALONE. THE EXPORT CROPS, TOBACCO AND COTTON, ARE ALSO SUBSIDIZED OVER THE WORLD PRICES. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT WHILE THE GOOD PRICE PAID FOR CAPSULES IS AN INCENTIVE NOT TO INCISE FOR AND COLLECT OPIUM THAT FARMERS WOULD NOT INCISE EVEN IF THE PRICE WERE LOWER. IN 1974-1975, THE FIRST YEAR OF CAPSULE PRODUCTION, THERE WAS NOT ONE KNOWN CASE OF INCISION FOR OPIUM DESPITE THE FACT THE PRICE FOR CAPSULES HAD NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED UNTIL AFTER THE INCISION PERIOD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS PASSED AND CAPSULE YIELDS WERE VERY UNCERTAIN. THERE WERE ALSO NO KNOWN CASES OF INCISION IN THE 1975-1976 CROP YEAR AS FARMERS HAD FULLY ACCEPTED THE "STRAW PROCESS".

5. THE GOT HAS GREATLY STRENGTHENED ITS LICENSING AND CONTROL PROGRAM OVER THE LAST THREE CROP YEARS. TMO HAS 130 TEAMS IN THE FIELD WITH 104 VEHICLES AVAILABLE. EVERY FIELD IS CHECKED SEVERAL TIMES DURING LICENSING, MEASURING, YIELD-ESTIMATING, AND PERMISSION-TO-HARVEST VISITS TO VILLAGES. THE ENFORCEMENT ELEMENTS HAVE REPEATEDLY SHOWN THEIR INTEREST IN SEEING THAT VIOLATORS WERE QUICKLY AND SEVERELY PUNISHED.

6. IN SUMMARY, EMBASSY BELIEVES CONTROL AND ENFORCEMENT MEASURES ARE ADEQUATE TO INSURE THAT THERE WILL BE NO ILLICIT OPIATES FROM TURKEY AGAIN IN 1977 DESPITE THE LARGER CROP. THE TWO-YEAR RECORD OF NO KNOWN CASES OF INCISION FOR OPIUM IN TURKEY AND NO OPIATES SEIZED ON THE WORLD ILLICIT MARKET THAT COULD BE IDENTIFIED AS

ORIGINATING FROM TURKISH-GROWN POPPY PLANTS
IS AN EXCELLENT RECORD. THE SAFETY OF THE STRAW PROCESS
AND THE FACT THAT THERE HAVE NEVER BEEN ANY KNOWN CASES
OF CLANDESTINE EXTRACTION OF OPIATES FROM POPPY STRAW
SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.
MACOMBER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition History: n/a
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